



*United States Department of State  
Bureau of Consular Affairs*

# VISA BULLETIN

**Number 21 Volume X**

**Washington, D.C.**

IMMIGRANT NUMBERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

## A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during September for: "Final Action Dates" and "Dates for Filing Applications," indicating when immigrant visa applicants should be notified to assemble and submit required documentation to the National Visa Center.

Unless otherwise indicated on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website at [www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo](http://www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo), individuals seeking to file applications for adjustment of status with USCIS in the Department of Homeland Security must use the "Final Action Dates" charts below for determining when they can file such applications. When USCIS determines that there are more immigrant visas available for the fiscal year than there are known applicants for such visas, USCIS will state on its website that applicants may instead use the "Dates for Filing Visa Applications" charts in this Bulletin.

1. Procedures for determining dates. Consular officers are required to report to the Department of State documentarily qualified applicants for numerically limited visas; USCIS reports applicants for adjustment of status. Allocations in the charts below were made, to the extent possible, in chronological order of reported priority dates, for demand received by August 7<sup>th</sup>. If not all demand could be satisfied, the category or foreign state in which demand was excessive was deemed oversubscribed. The final action date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who could not be reached within the numerical limits. If it becomes necessary during the monthly allocation process to retrogress a final action date, supplemental requests for numbers will be honored only if the priority date falls within the new final action date announced in this bulletin. If at any time an annual limit were reached, it would be necessary to immediately make the preference category "unavailable", and no further requests for numbers would be honored.

2. The fiscal year 2018 limit for Family-sponsored preference immigrants determined in accordance with Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is 226,000. The fiscal year 2018 limit for Employment-based preference immigrants calculated under INA 201 is 140,292. Section 202 prescribes that the per-country limit for preference immigrants is set at 7% of the total annual Family-sponsored and Employment-based preference limits, i.e., 26,640 for FY-2018. The dependent area limit is set at 2%, or 7,326.

3. INA Section 203(e) provides that family-sponsored and employment-based preference visas be issued to eligible immigrants in the order in which a petition in behalf of each has been filed. Section 203(d) provides that spouses and children of preference immigrants are entitled to the same status, and the same order of consideration, if accompanying or following to join the principal. The visa prorating provisions of Section 202(e) apply to allocations for a foreign state or dependent area when visa demand exceeds the per-country limit. These provisions apply at present to the following oversubscribed chargeability areas: CHINA-mainland born, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, INDIA, MEXICO, PHILIPPINES, and VIETNAM.

4. Section 203(a) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Family-sponsored immigrant visas as follows:

**FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCES**

**First:** (F1) Unmarried Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens: 23,400 plus any numbers not required for fourth preference.

**Second:** Spouses and Children, and Unmarried Sons and Daughters of Permanent Residents: 114,200, plus the number (if any) by which the worldwide family preference level exceeds 226,000, plus any unused first preference numbers:

A. (F2A) Spouses and Children of Permanent Residents: 77% of the overall second preference limitation, of which 75% are exempt from the per-country limit;

B. (F2B) Unmarried Sons and Daughters (21 years of age or older) of Permanent Residents: 23% of the overall second preference limitation.

**Third:** (F3) Married Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens: 23,400, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences.

**Fourth:** (F4) Brothers and Sisters of Adult U.S. Citizens: 65,000, plus any numbers not required by first three preferences.

**A. FINAL ACTION DATES FOR FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCE CASES**

On the chart below, the listing of a date for any class indicates that the class is oversubscribed (see paragraph 1); "C" means current, i.e., numbers are authorized for issuance to all qualified applicants; and "U" means unauthorized, i.e., numbers are not authorized for issuance. (NOTE: Numbers are authorized for issuance only for applicants whose priority date is **earlier** than the final action date listed below.)

<b><u>Family-Sponsored</u></b>	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	08APR11	08APR11	08APR11	01AUG97	15NOV06
F2A	22JUL16	22JUL16	22JUL16	01JUL16	22JUL16
F2B	01NOV11	01NOV11	01NOV11	22APR97	22APR07
F3	01MAY06	01MAY06	01MAY06	22DEC95	01JUN95
F4	08JAN05	08JAN05	08APR04	15JAN98	01JUN95

\*NOTE: For September, F2A numbers EXEMPT from per-country limit are authorized for issuance to applicants from all countries with priority dates earlier than 01JUL16. F2A numbers SUBJECT to per-country limit are authorized for issuance to applicants chargeable to all countries EXCEPT MEXICO with priority dates beginning 01JUL16 and earlier than 22JUL16. All F2A numbers provided for MEXICO are exempt from the per-country limit.

**B. DATES FOR FILING FAMILY-SPONSORED VISA APPLICATIONS**

The chart below reflects dates for filing visa applications within a timeframe justifying immediate action in the application process. Applicants for immigrant visas who have a priority date earlier than the application date in the chart below may assemble and submit required documents to the Department of State's National Visa Center, following receipt of notification from the National Visa Center containing detailed instructions. The application date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who cannot submit documentation to the National Visa Center for an immigrant visa. If a category is designated "current," all applicants in the relevant category may file applications, regardless of priority date.

The "C" listing indicates that the category is current, and that applications may be filed regardless of the applicant's priority date. The listing of a date for any category indicates that only applicants with a priority date which is **earlier** than the listed date may file their application.

Visit [www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo](http://www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo) for information on whether USCIS has determined that this chart can be used (in lieu of the chart in paragraph 4.A.) this month for filing applications for adjustment of status with USCIS.

<b>Family-Sponsored</b>	<b>All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed</b>	<b>CHINA-mainland born</b>	<b>INDIA</b>	<b>MEXICO</b>	<b>PHILIPPINES</b>
F1	08MAR12	08MAR12	08MAR12	01SEP98	15FEB08
F2A	01DEC17	01DEC17	01DEC17	01DEC17	01DEC17
F2B	22MAR14	22MAR14	22MAR14	08JUN97	15DEC07
F3	22SEP06	22SEP06	22SEP06	08OCT98	01AUG95
F4	01MAY05	01MAY05	01JAN05	01JUN98	01DEC95

5. Section 203(b) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Employment-based immigrant visas as follows:

**EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCES**

**First:** Priority Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required for fourth and fifth preferences.

**Second:** Members of the Professions Holding Advanced Degrees or Persons of Exceptional Ability: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required by first preference.

**Third:** Skilled Workers, Professionals, and Other Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide level, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences, not more than 10,000 of which to "\*Other Workers".

**Fourth:** Certain Special Immigrants: 7.1% of the worldwide level.

**Fifth:** Employment Creation: 7.1% of the worldwide level, not less than 3,000 of which reserved for investors in a targeted rural or high-unemployment area, and 3,000 set aside for investors in regional centers by Sec. 610 of Pub. L. 102-395.

**A. FINAL ACTION DATES FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCE CASES**

On the chart below, the listing of a date for any class indicates that the class is oversubscribed (see paragraph 1); "C" means current, i.e., numbers are authorized for issuance to all qualified applicants; and "U" means unauthorized, i.e., numbers are not authorized for issuance. (NOTE: Numbers are authorized for issuance only for applicants whose priority date is **earlier** than the final action date listed below.)

<u>Employment- Based</u>	All Charge- ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-	EL SALVADOR	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES	VIETNAM
		mainland born	GUATEMALA				
1st	01JUN16	01JAN12	01JUN16	01JAN12	01JUN16	01JUN16	01JUN16
2nd	01JAN13	01JAN13	01JAN13	01JAN07	01JAN13	01JAN13	01JAN13
3rd	01NOV16	01NOV14	01NOV16	01JAN03	01NOV16	01NOV16	01NOV16
Other	01NOV16	01MAY07	01NOV16	01JAN03	01NOV16	01NOV16	01NOV16
Workers							
4th	C	C	15FEB16	15FEB16	15FEB16	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	15FEB16	15FEB16	15FEB16	C	C
5th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	08AUG14	C	C	C	C	08AUG14
5th Regional Center (I5 and R5)	C	08AUG14	C	C	C	C	08AUG14

\*Employment Third Preference Other Workers Category: Section 203(e) of the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) passed by Congress in November 1997, as amended by Section 1(e) of Pub. L. 105-139, provides that once the Employment Third Preference Other Worker (EW) cut-off date has reached the priority date of the latest EW petition approved prior to November 19, 1997, the 10,000 EW numbers available for a fiscal year are to be reduced by up to 5,000 annually beginning in the following fiscal year. This reduction is to be made for as long as necessary to offset adjustments under the NACARA program. Since the EW cut-off date reached November 19, 1997 during Fiscal Year 2001, the reduction in the EW annual limit to 5,000 began in Fiscal Year 2002.

**B. DATES FOR FILING OF EMPLOYMENT-BASED VISA APPLICATIONS**

The chart below reflects dates for filing visa applications within a timeframe justifying immediate action in the application process. Applicants for immigrant visas who have a priority date earlier than the application date in the chart may assemble and submit required documents to the Department of State's National Visa Center, following receipt of notification from the National Visa Center containing detailed instructions. The application date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who cannot submit documentation to the National Visa Center for an immigrant visa. If a category is designated "current," all applicants in the relevant category may file, regardless of priority date.

The "C" listing indicates that the category is current, and that applications may be filed regardless of the applicant's priority date. The listing of a date for any category indicates that only applicants with a priority date which is **earlier** than the listed date may file their application.

Visit [www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo](http://www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo) for information on whether USCIS has determined that this chart can be used (in lieu of the chart in paragraph 5.A.) this month for filing applications for adjustment of status with USCIS.

<b>Employment-Based</b>	<b>All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed</b>	<b>CHINA - mainland born</b>	<b>EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS</b>	<b>INDIA</b>	<b>MEXICO</b>	<b>PHILIPPINES</b>
1st	C	C	C	C	C	C
2nd	C	01APR15	C	22MAY09	C	C
3rd	C	01JAN16	C	01MAY09	C	01JUL17
Other Workers	C	01JUN08	C	01MAY09	C	01JUL17
4th	C	C	01MAY16	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	01MAY16	C	C	C
5 <sup>th</sup> Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	01OCT14	C	C	C	C
5 <sup>th</sup> Regional Center (I5 and R5)	C	01OCT14	C	C	C	C

6. The Department of State has a recorded message with the Final Action date information which can be heard at: (202) 485-7699. This recording is updated on or about the tenth of each month with information on final action dates for the following month.

B. DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT (DV) CATEGORY FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

Section 203(c) of the INA provides up to 55,000 immigrant visas each fiscal year to permit additional immigration opportunities for persons from countries with low admissions during the previous five years. The NACARA stipulates that beginning with DV-99, and for as long as necessary, up to 5,000 of the 55,000 annually-allocated diversity visas will be made available for use under the NACARA program. **This resulted in reduction of the DV-2018 annual limit to 50,000.** DV visas are divided among six geographic regions. No one country can receive more than seven percent of the available diversity visas in any one year.

For September, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2018 applicants chargeable to all regions/eligible countries as follows. When an allocation cut-off number is shown, visas are available only for applicants with DV regional lottery rank numbers BELOW the specified allocation cut-off number:

Region	All DV Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed Separately
AFRICA	39,500
ASIA	CURRENT
EUROPE	25,775
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	CURRENT
OCEANIA	1,450
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	1,715

Entitlement to immigrant status in the DV category lasts only through the end of the fiscal (visa) year for which the applicant is selected in the lottery. The year of entitlement for all applicants registered for the DV-2018 program ends as of September 30, 2018. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2018 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2018 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2018. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2018 cannot be taken for granted. Numbers could be exhausted prior to September 30.

C. THE DIVERSITY (DV) IMMIGRANT CATEGORY RANK CUT-OFFS WHICH WILL APPLY IN OCTOBER

For October, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2019 applicants chargeable to all regions/eligible countries as follows. When an allocation cut-off number is shown, visas are available only for applicants with DV regional lottery rank numbers BELOW the specified allocation cut-off number:

Region	All DV Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed Separately	
AFRICA	2,750	Except: Egypt 1,900
ASIA	1,000	Except: Iran 800 Nepal 600
EUROPE	2,000	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	4	
OCEANIA	100	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	150	

D. SPECIAL IMMIGRANT (SI) TRANSLATOR CATEGORY VISA AVAILABILITY

Given the limited availability of visa numbers and the existing demand, it has been necessary to maintain a September Final Action Date of April 22, 2012.

E. DETERMINATION OF THE NUMERICAL LIMITS ON IMMIGRANTS REQUIRED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT (INA)

The State Department is required to make a determination of the worldwide numerical limitations, as outlined in Section 201(c) and (d) of the INA, on an annual basis. These calculations are based in part on data provided by U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding the number of immediate relative adjustments in the preceding year and the number of aliens paroled into the United States under Section 212(d)(5) in the second preceding year. Without this information, it is impossible to make an official determination of the annual limits. To avoid delays in processing while waiting for the USCIS data, the Visa Office (VO) bases allocations on the minimum annual limits outlined in Section 201 of the INA. On July 10<sup>th</sup>, USCIS provided the required data to VO.

The Department of State has determined the Family and Employment preference numerical limits for FY-2018 in accordance with the terms of Section 201 of the INA. These numerical limitations for FY-2018 are as follows:

Worldwide Family-Sponsored preference limit:	226,000
Worldwide Employment-Based preference limit:	140,292

Under INA Section 202(a), the per-country limit is fixed at 7% of the family and employment annual limits. For FY-2018 the per-country limit is 25,640. The dependent area annual limit is 2%, or 7,326.



F. FAMILY-SPONSORED VISA AVAILABILITY DURING SEPTEMBER

As mentioned in item E of the July Visa Bulletin, the level of applicant demand in several preference categories has been steadily increasing. This has resulted in the retrogression of the dates for several Family First and Third preference category dates for September. Such action has been necessary to hold number use within the worldwide annual limits.

The retrogression of the above mentioned family dates will only be temporary and in October, the first month of fiscal year 2019, the final action dates will be returned to (at least) those established for August.

G. OVERSUBSCRIPTION OF SEPTEMBER EMPLOYMENT-BASED SECOND AND THIRD PREFERENCE CATEGORIES

WORLDWIDE, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, MEXICO, AND PHILIPPINES EMPLOYMENT-BASED SECOND (E2), Third (E3), and Third Other Worker (EW) PREFERENCES: As readers were advised in item F of the July Visa Bulletin, there has been an extremely high rate of demand for Employment numbers, primarily for USCIS adjustment of status applicants as a result of the successful implementation of their new interview process. Therefore, pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act, it has been necessary to impose E2, E3, and EW Final Action Dates for the month of September with these dates being imposed immediately for new requests for visa numbers. This action will allow the Department to hold worldwide number use within the maximum allowed under the FY-2018 annual limits.

The implementation of the above mentioned dates will only be temporary and in October, the first month of fiscal year 2019, the final action dates will be returned to those established for August.

Readers were also advised in item F of the July Visa Bulletin that some retrogression might occur prior to the end of the fiscal year. It has been necessary to retrogress the September Final Action Dates for the China Employment-based Second, and India Employment Second, Third, and Third Other Worker preferences in an effort to hold worldwide number use within the maximum allowed under their FY-2018 annual limits. This will only be temporary and in October, the first month of fiscal year 2019, the final action dates will be returned to those established for August.

H. VISA AVAILABILITY IN THE COMING MONTHS

FAMILY-sponsored categories (potential monthly movement)

Worldwide dates:

- F1: Up to three weeks (after October recovery)
- F2A: Three to five weeks
- F2B: Up to six weeks
- F3: Three to five weeks (after October recovery)
- F4: Up to five weeks

EMPLOYMENT-based categories (potential monthly movement)

Employment First:

WORLDWIDE (all countries): October Final Action Dates will be imposed for all countries. Limited, if any forward movement can be expected prior to December.

Employment Second:

- Worldwide: Current for the foreseeable future.
- China: Slow movement pending receipt of demand from recent advances
- India: Up to two weeks

Employment Third:

- Worldwide: Current
- China: Up to three weeks
- India: Slow movement pending receipt of demand from recent advances
- Mexico: Current
- Philippines: Minimal

Employment Fourth: Current for most countries

- El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras: Little, if any forward movement
- Mexico: Up to three months

Employment Fifth: The category will remain "Current" for most countries

- China-mainland born: Up to one week
- Vietnam: Steady forward movement

The above final action date projections for the Family and Employment categories indicate what is likely to happen on a monthly basis through January. The determination of the actual monthly final action dates is subject to fluctuations in applicant demand and a number of other variables.

I. OBTAINING THE MONTHLY VISA BULLETIN

The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs publishes the monthly Visa Bulletin on their website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) under the Visas section. Alternatively, visitors may access the Visa Bulletin directly by going to:

<http://www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/bulletin.html>.

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and in the message body type: **Signoff Visa-Bulletin**

The Department of State also has available a recorded message with visa final action dates which can be heard at: **(202) 485-7699**. The recording is normally updated on/about the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month with information on final action dates for the following month.

Readers may submit questions regarding Visa Bulletin related items by E-mail at the following address:

**VISABULLETIN@STATE.GOV**

(This address cannot be used to subscribe to the Visa Bulletin.)